



RTCA in New York

The Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) program is the community assistance arm of the National Park Service. The National Park Service (NPS) staff provide technical assistance to community groups, city, county, tribal governments, and non-profit organizations working to enhance close-to-home outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation opportunities. We help local leaders plan and design trails and parks; conserve and improve access to natural areas; protect special places; and create recreation opportunities.

The RTCA program in New York offers a wide range of services that can be tailored to meet the needs of an individual project. The NPS staff members are trained facilitators who encourage project leaders to build collaborative partnerships among governmental and non-governmental stakeholders. The program helps communities and groups define their vision, goals, and objectives; analyze issues and opportunities; and develop strategic action plans and time lines for projects. We do not provide financial assistance, but can help project partners identify and secure sources of funding and technical support.

Any community with committed project partners can apply for assistance. Believing the best plans are completed locally, the National Park Service will work with partners to encourage broad-based community participation in planning, designing, and implementing the projects we support.

In 2016, the National Park Service in New York will work on a variety of projects including:

- **AdventureLAB** – The project goal is to develop a partnership-based, systematic approach with National Parks and partners to provide outdoor adventure, learning and service opportunities to New York City students. (Location: New York City, New York)
- **Erie Canal / Mohawk River Historic Water Trail** – The project goal is to enhance community canoe & kayak access, water trail facilities and visitor information on the 128-mile Mohawk River section of the Erie Canalway system. (Location: Rome to Waterford, New York)
- **Finger Lakes Regional Water Trails** – The project goal is to create water trail opportunities on the Finger Lakes and linking waterways. (Location: Finger Lakes Region of New York)
- **Hyde Park - Dutchess County Healthy Trails** – The project goal is to create a county-wide network of trails, neighborhood linkages, and health-promoting programs for parks and trails in Dutchess County communities. (Location: Dutchess County, New York)
- **Troy Collar City Ramble** – The project goal is to connect neighborhoods, parks, schools, businesses to the Hudson River waterfront through a city-wide system of urban trails and alternative transportation. (Location: Troy, New York)
- **Ulster County Rail Trail Connections** – The project goal is to create a county-wide system of rail trails and rail-with-trail sections that will benefit communities and link Walkway Over the Hudson to the Catskills. (Location: Ulster County, New York)
- **Groundwork Buffalo** – The project goal is to implement transformative environmental projects focusing on community development, outdoor recreation and youth development, in partnership with the City and federal agencies. (Location: Buffalo, New York)



Local residents and community groups decorating the crosswalks in the City of Troy, New York

- **Groundwork Hudson-Valley** – The project goal is to make neglected communities more sustainable through environmental projects with residents, and runs the Science Barge, an urban farm and education center. (Location: Yonkers, New York)

Recent Success Story

Ulster County Rail Trail Connections – Ulster County, NY owns 38 miles of the old Ulster & Delaware Railroad corridor, starting in the City of Kingston, and weaving through the Catskills to the county line. A dramatic 11-mile section runs along New York City's Ashokan Reservoir. Trail proponents and a local heritage railroad have argued for many years over the corridor's use. The railroad leases the entire corridor, and uses about 12 of the 38 miles for its public programs. With much of the corridor in disrepair, and the railroad's 25-year lease set to expire in 2016, the dispute came to a head. The County Executive proposed a segmented approach to rail and trail, and worked out an agreement with New York City to create an 11-mile section of rail trail through reservoir lands, which had been closed to the public for 100 years. After heated debate, the County Legislature, along with both trail and rail proponents, finally arrived at a compromise, and adopted unanimously a policy of segmented trail and rail-with-trail.

For more information about the RTCA program refer to: www.nps.gov/rtca, or for information about ongoing or potential RTCA projects in New York contact:

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